

April 1999

From the Reference Desk

Tom Gilson

College of Charleston, gilsont@cofc.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://docs.lib.purdue.edu/atg>



Part of the [Library and Information Science Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Gilson, Tom (1999) "From the Reference Desk," *Against the Grain*: Vol. 11: Iss. 2, Article 18.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7771/2380-176X.3836>

This document has been made available through Purdue e-Pubs, a service of the Purdue University Libraries. Please contact epubs@purdue.edu for additional information.

Springer Interview

from page 35

in social work, public health, rehabilitation and medical education, in each of these fewer than 6 titles a year. It is actually a cohesive total, focusing on health and social services.

ATG: *How many books per year do you publish? Do you sell primarily to libraries?*

US: We have currently 800 active titles and we publish 60 books a year. Libraries are very important customers for us, since the majority of our titles are professional books, reference books, annuals, journals, and of course encyclopedias. Our main contacts for libraries are: **Login Brothers, Majors, Rittenhouse, Yankee Book Peddler, Baker and Taylor, Blackwells** and most of the companies represented in *Against the Grain*.

ATG: *How about journals?*

US: We publish sixteen journals, most of them quarterlies, in all areas of our book publishing. Some are association owned (like *International Psychogeriatrics*), some are our property. A successful one is the *Journal of Case Management*, with roughly 1000 subscribers.

One of the journals, *Contemporary Gerontology*, was modeled on *Contemporary Psychology*. It mainly contains reviews (25 to 30) of books on aging within their first year of publication. (I founded it out of frustration with the few reviews published in the field and their long delays in appearance).

ATG: *Let us talk about international activities. I know that you have attended the Frankfurt Book Fair since 1974. What do you do there?*

US: Yes, we have regular international trade conventions, selling nursing, psychology, and social work, also medical education titles abroad. We have a double booth at **Frankfurt** every year. Appointments for my meetings with foreign publishers are made two months in advance, so I can fit into the four days circa 40 appointments, always at my booth, since my goal is selling foreign rights, never purchasing rights, as we cannot sell translated books. Our areas of publishing are ahead of those in other countries, and our rare attempts to sell translated titles, even if of high quality, were unsuccessful. I do enjoy the **Frankfurt Fairs**. They are a book person's highlights of the year.

ATG: *What about the Web? What sort of presence do you have there?*

US: We have a Website <www.Springerpub.com> with complete bibliographic information on all our books. For


the most recent ones we plan to have tables of content. Of course we are actively dealing with Barnesandnoble.com and Amazon. They buy from us almost daily. Future plans include our own "selling on Web" system and developing "Distance Learning" courses with the **Nursing Division of New York University**.

ATG: *Why do you like being an independent publisher?*

US: Above all, I enjoy the freedom. I can be creative, act fast, create contacts, don't have to think of money every minute of the day, can make mistakes without losing my job, can follow my hunches, don't need to fabricate reports all the time. And very important: I can manage staff and company as I feel it to be fair. My staff of 40 has free health insurance, 401K, 12 days vacation (plus two personal days). New mothers can nurse babies in my offices, mothers with occasional baby-sitting problems can bring a child for a day to the office. As a woman business owner, I want to be an example. ("If not I, who?") I feel responsible for part of the "quality of life" of my employees.

ATG: *Tell us more about yourself.*

US: Looking back from today to the years when I started, I realize what mistakes I made then, especially overprinting. In course of time we had to discard thousands of books, which pained me much. On the other hand, I was somewhat successful, at least in the view of other publishers. For example, I was elected in 1976 as member of the Board of Directors of the **AAP**. And three years later I was asked to join the first delegation of American publishers invited by the **Chinese Publishers Association**. I was asked to give a lecture on publishing in the medical sciences, in English with a local translator. I had it translated in Chinatown before the trip. It was an interesting visit to Peking, Shanghai, Canton, but not much business came out of it then.

Other international meetings of the scholarly professions took me to Italy, England, France, Hungary, Germany, Japan, Mexico, and Brazil. This life has been interesting. Today I tend to reduce my travel and spend more time in my country place, hiking in the woods north of New York, and spending time with friends. 

*This interview took place one Saturday morning in February. I felt invigorated after it was over! I hope you will take the time to meet Ursula when she speaks at the **Charleston Conference** November 2-4, 1999!—KS*

From the Reference Desk

Column Editor: **Tom Gilson** (College of Charleston) <gilsont@cofc.edu>

Almost a quarter century has passed since the war in Vietnam ended and at last we have a multi-volume encyclopedia which puts the war and its legacy in perspective. The *Encyclopedia of the Vietnam War: A Political, Social and Military History* (1998, 0874369835; \$275), published by ABC-CLIO, attempts an objective look at our country's most controversial and divisive war.

The *Encyclopedia* contains over 900 entries covering specific battles and operations, military tactics and weapons systems, as well as domestic issues, like the draft and the anti-war movement. Significant personalities (from all sides), are covered as is the role of art, music and the media in shaping perceptions of the war. Additionally, editor Spencer Tucker opens with a brief introductory essay outlining the history of Vietnam and includes a number of articles which discuss prior European involvement, and the perspective from the Vietnamese side. In short, this *Encyclopedia* lives up to its subtitle, and offers a thorough treatment of the many political, social and military complexities that inform the Vietnam experience.

While notable for its quality content, the *Encyclopedia of the Vietnam War* also contains a number of other features adding to its value. There is a series of 22 helpful maps, reprinted in both volumes one and two, as well as bibliographies included with each entry and *see also* references guiding the reader to related articles. However, it is the third volume which supplies the most significant feature. It contains over 200 related primary sources including speeches, telegrams, memorandums, letters and official documents. This material is arranged chronologically from 1920 through 1995 and demonstrates the changes in official thinking and policies, both in the United States and Vietnam, over that period.

Editor Spencer Tucker and his over 125 contributors are to be commended for doing an admirable job. Given the quality of this set and the importance of its subject both academic and large public libraries will find it a necessary addition. Those libraries where interest is high should also consider Stanley Kutler's fine single volume *Encyclopedia of the Vietnam War* (1996, Prentice-Hall, 0132769328; \$125) and the *Historical Atlas of the Vietnam War* by Harry G. Summers published by Houghton Mifflin (1996, 0395722233; \$39.95).

Subject specific atlases are useful reference books which are sometimes overlooked and under appreciated. Often, maps are just part of the story. Usually, these references include tables, charts and narrative text which truly enhance their value. Macmillan Library Reference's *Growing up in*

continued on page 38

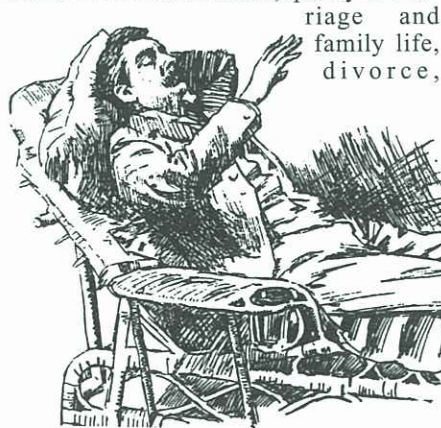
America: An Atlas of Youth in the USA. (1998, 0028972627: \$125) is a good example. It is a cavalcade of information and statistics relating to the status of children in America, all in one visually accessible package.

Editors Rickie Sanders and Matt Mattson have done a nice job in presenting a variety of statistical profiles in a readable and easily understood format. Divided into five chapters, *Growing up in America* provides the reader broad demographic data, as well as specifics related to poverty rates and government expenditures, medical and health issues, the criminal justice system and education. The text acts as a guide through a myriad of charts, tables and maps which graphically represent the information discussed. An appendix of mostly regional maps of the United States, reflecting ethnic diversity, is included, while a bibliography of sources and a helpful index rounding out the volume.

One caveat, while the statistics provided are fairly current (coming up through the mid 1990's), in some instances they may need to be supplemented by current editions of the *Statistical Abstract*, the *Digest of Education Statistics*, *Health, United States*, etc.

Nonetheless, *Growing up in America* will be a welcome addition to academic reference collections as well as for public libraries where there is interest in child welfare issues.

Another publication which will spark the interest of the more number-oriented among us, is the second edition of Oryx Press' *Statistical Handbook on the American Family* (1999, 157356169-X; \$62.50). Essentially, this book updates the 1992 version with more recent statistics; however it has been reorganized and more tightly edited. In a number of cases, tables have been combined giving the sense of a more content-laden effort. Many of the same issues are covered: marital status, quality of marriage and family life, divorce,



children's issues, sexual attitudes, living arrangements, kinship ties and working women. However, this second edition offers more in terms of economic context like family income, home ownership, financial assets and insurance as well as figures on poverty levels and public assistance.

The one area lacking in this reference is historical statistics. The *Statistical Handbook* does well reflecting more recent statistics, particularly 1980 to the present. But future editions might consider expanding to include more historical data from as early as the prior century and possibly before. Enabling students and researcher to follow long term historic trends would be a valued addition.

Another slight problem is with the formatting, and it relates to the citation of sources. It is question of location. The sources for all the tables included in the book are identified in a separate section called the "List of Sources" placed before the index in the back of the book. A more effective method is to list them directly below the table itself, similar to the way it is done in the *Statistical Abstract*. A separate "List of Sources" certainly has value as a indicator of the depth of research involved in producing the book, but for convenience, placement of the source with the related table is something editors Bruce A. Chadwick and Tim B. Heaton should consider. Admittedly, this is a minor criticism from a slightly anal retentive reviewer, but one worth mentioning.

Libraries which have found the first edition useful will want the update, especially at this price. Other libraries where there is need for this kind of information would also do well to consider it.

Speaking of Oryx Press, they have also released two titles in their new *American Political Landscape Series*, two of which I have received and would like to discuss. The *Encyclopedia of Women in American Politics* (1998, 1573561312; \$99) and its series companion, *Encyclopedia of Religion in American Politics* (1998, 1573561304; \$99) are both handy one-volume references which students and general readers will find of value. Americans are fascinated by politics and these two volumes treat aspects of our political life which are of increasingly recognized importance.

The *Encyclopedia of Women in American Politics* is arranged alphabetically and treats the major organizations, movements, issues, court cases and personalities that have shaped women's involvement in American politics. For example, brief biographies of influential women ranging from Abigail Adams to Nancy Reagan, Carrie Nation to Phyllis Schlafly,

Sojourner Truth to Coretta Scott King and from Lucy Stone to Gloria Steinem are included. Issues as diverse as political participation, the glass ceiling, pornography, child custody and sex discrimination are also covered. In addition, the *Encyclopedia* has a series of appendices which contain speeches and documents, tables of elected officials, women's political organizations and a timeline.

Encyclopedia of Religion in American Politics follows much the same format and the coverage is similar. Individual politicians, jurists, theologians, evangelists, and other religious leaders who have left an imprint on the American political scene are accorded biographies. Influential sects and denominations, political parties, religious organizations, important legal cases, political movements and issues ranging from the blue laws to school prayer are also included. And, except for the lack of a table of elected officials, the type of appendices are the same as in the *Encyclopedia of Women*.

The entries in both of these encyclopedias are short, factual and clearly written, fulfilling the editorial goal of "giving accurate information in manageable doses." See also references are indicated by bold-face within the text of each article, and there are short bibliographies with each entry. The indexing is thorough and reliable. The only major improvement I would recommend for these references is some form of thematic index to tie topics together at a glance.

Generally speaking, these are reference books which are intended to be dipped into, not dwelled on. They both pack a lot of straightforward information within their covers, but as you scan through them, you begin to get a solid feel for the complexity and diversity of the relationship of religion and women to American politics. Both public and academic libraries will want to purchase these books.

The *1906 Olympic Games* by Bill Mallon, (1999, 0786405511; \$39.50) is one of those labors of love that tries to reveal "all the data" on its chosen topic. Author Bill Mallon says that there is "a lack of documentation" on the early Olympics, so he along with his publisher McFarland, do their best to rectify the oversight. This is the fourth in a series of books which cover the early Olympics, and if Mallon has missed anything about the 1906 Olympiad in this current volume, you would be hard pressed to name it..

The 1906 games were unique in that there were the only Olympics which did not fit the normal four-year cycle. They were part of an early Olympic plan in which the international games would take place ev-

continued on page 40

From the Reference Desk
from page 38

ery two years, alternating between Athens and other international cities. In any case, Mellon relates these facts, as well as others pertinent to the development of the games in an introductory background section. This is followed by a statistical summary including information on the organizers and competitors. But the meat of the book is contained in the chapters on the events themselves. There are chapters on track and field, cycling, diving, fencing, soccer, gymnastics, rowing, swimming, tennis, weight-lifting, wrestling and even tug-of-war.

Each chapter is introduced by a brief narrative and informative text and notes are interspersed when further explanation is needed. Naturally the results of each event is given listing the date, number of countries participating along with the competitors, their placement and scores. In addition, a list of the jury members or judges is included. Mallon used both official Olympic records and primary sources, particularly newspaper accounts in his research.

Public librarians will be particularly pleased with the exhaustive coverage offered here. The *1906 Olympic Games* may be appropriate for reference or circulation depending on need, but in either case, it is worth the price. Others in the series include: *The 1896 Olympic Games* (1997, 0786403799; \$32.50) *The 1900 Olympic Games* (1997, 0786403780; \$39.50) and *The 1904 Olympic Games* (1998, 0786405503; \$39.50).

We never seem to tire of our fascination with things English. Retellings of English history and literature are popular entertainment staples today, and have been for as long as I can remember. Witness the current popularity of the films *Elizabeth* and *Shakespeare in Love*, as well as the audience response to past classics like *Lion in Winter* and *A Man for All Seasons*. But the interest is not only popular, there is also a scholarly fascination with England's history and influence.

With the publication of *Medieval England: An Encyclopedia* (1998, 0824057864; \$135), Garland has produced a reference title sure to feed this scholarly interest. Naturally, biographical sketches are included, with both famous, and not so famous names given their due. Legends like Eleanor of Aquitaine, Richard the Lionheart, and Edward the Black Prince appear along with the less familiar like Felix of Crowland, Wulfstan of York and Margery Kempe. But there is more than biography in this encyclopedia. Articles on politics, law, religion, economics, literature,

art, music and military topics are also included. In addition, there are entries on the social aspects of medieval life like literacy, marriage, outlawry, serfdom, prostitution, urban life and childhood. Organization is alphabetical with a thematic index, *see also* references and an overall subject index providing structure. Maps, glossaries of musical, liturgical and architectural terms, as well as lists of English Kings and Queens, the Archbishops of Canterbury and York and medieval Popes are added features. The writing is scholarly and the editors provide useful bibliographies after each entry.

Medieval England: An Encyclopedia is a comprehensive and authoritative treatment of a remarkable time and place. It does justice to its topic, and that is no small compliment. It is an obvious choice for academic libraries supporting medieval studies or English history courses.

Although the title is less than promising, Scarecrow's *Dead Countries of the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (1998, 0810834456; \$45) offers a unique slant on world politics and geography through a look at stamp collecting. You see, a "dead country" is one that once issued postage stamps

but no longer does. Author Les Harding started the project after he realized there was no single reference in which a stamp collector could find a list of places that fit the definition of a "dead country." However he has expanded the original concept and does more than identify these countries, protectorates, princely states, etc. He provides brief descriptions and basic statistics for each, along with the reason it ceased to exist. Adding a little flavor, he also includes pictures of individual stamps and quotes from the travel literature. The book is organized into fifteen chapters divided geographically and each has a bibliography and index.

One of the additional fascinations of Harding's effort is how it reveals the volatility of world politics and the geographic formation of nations. Whether intentional or not, *Dead Countries* ... points to how politically unstable the world has been over the last two centuries.

Admittedly, this is a quirky little book, but it is one that many will find compelling. Public libraries where there is a strong interest in stamp collecting should consider it. For academic reference collections, it is a marginal choice, but it may find a home in some circulating collections. 🐼

TestDriving CD-ROMs — Reviews of CD-ROM products



Column Editor: Norman

Desmarais (Acquisitions Librarian, Providence College,
Phillips Memorial Library; phone: 401-865-2241; fax: 401-865-2823)
<normd_1@providence.edu> <<http://www.providence.edu/pml/pmlhp1.htm>>

The National Gallery: Complete Illustrated Catalogue

National Gallery Publications Limited, 5/6 Pall Mall East, London SW1P 5BA
0171-839-8544 (tel.) 0171-930-0108 (fax)
available from: Yale University Press, P.O. Box 209040, New Haven,
CT 06520-9040 800-987-7323 (tel.) 800-777-9253 (fax)
ISBN: 1-85709-194-9 Price: \$95

System requirements: * a Multimedia PC (MPC) or compatible, with 386SX or higher microprocessor, 8 MB of RAM, 1- 3 MB of available hard disk space;
* an MPC-compatible CD-ROM drive (double-speed or higher recommended);
* VGA+ graphics adapter and driver (640 x 480 minimum screen size, 256 colors minimum; thousands or millions of colors recommended for viewing the enlarged pictures); * MS-DOS operating system version 5.0 or later;
* Microsoft Windows operating system version 3.1 or later (including Windows 95); * Microsoft Windows compatible mouse

Reviewed by Norman Desmarais (Providence College)
<normd_1@providence.edu>

The *National Gallery: Complete Illustrated Catalogue* "aims to provide concise, systematic and up-to-date information on

every work owned by the National Gallery." The CD-ROM contains the complete text
continued on page 42